

# Inclusive Practices for Students with Autism in Activities

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# Inclusion:

- “The definition that we use for inclusion has more to do with social equity and applies to all kids, not just kids with disabilities. For example, kids with second language issues, gifted kids, and kids who qualify for Title I programs because of circumstances of poverty. Our view of inclusion is about all kids.”

--Wayne Sailor on “The Inclusive Class Podcast”



*The Inclusive Class Podcast*

# What is successful inclusion?

- The student made gains in personal development, including acquiring knowledge and skills that are anticipated for all children.
- The students are welcomed by teachers, staff and peers and accepted as a full member of the group.
- The student appears to be comfortable, happy and part of the group.



# What is Autism?

- Autism is a general term for a group of complex disorders of brain development.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder is characterized (in varying degrees) by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors.
- 1 in 68 children are identified on the spectrum.



--Autism Speaks

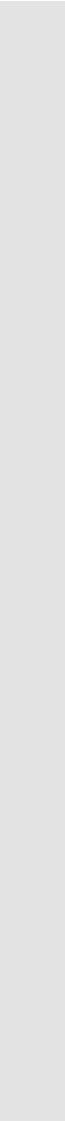
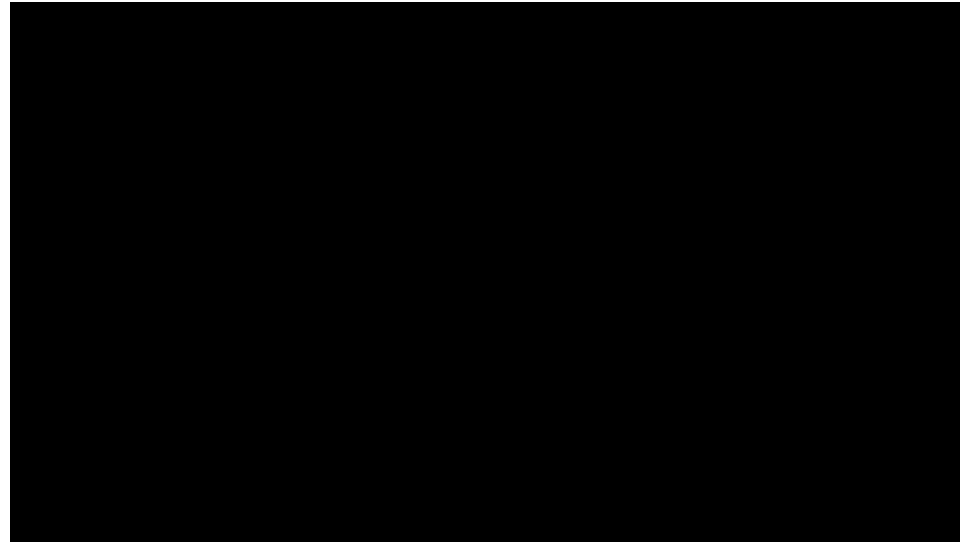
## Indicators:

- Impaired ability to make friends with peers and impaired ability to initiate or sustain a conversation with others.
- Absence or impairment of imaginative and social play.
- Repetitive or unusual use of language.
- Abnormally intense or focused interest.
- Preoccupation with certain objects or subjects
- Inflexible adherence to specific routines or rituals



--National Institute of Health

A glimpse in to  
what it's like to  
be a child with  
high-  
functioning  
Autism



Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.



--Henry Ford

# Why activities?

- Participation in student activities increases students' standardized test scores, GPAs, graduation rates, college acceptance rates, and college success rates. It practically eliminates the likelihood that a student will choose to drop out of high school.
- Student activities develop core social and emotional skills while reducing high-risk behavioral problems, and long term public assistance needs.
- Students with disabilities graduate at a lower rate than their peers. (2015-16: 65.5% vs. 83% typical peers.)



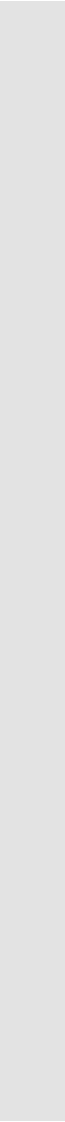


# Inclusion for students in Activities & Events

- Inclusion in Student Activities & Events:
- Be Part of the Solution
- Troubleshoot Challenges
- Break Down Barriers
- Support Access
- Invest in Students



# Sensory Processing Disorder



# Collaborate

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

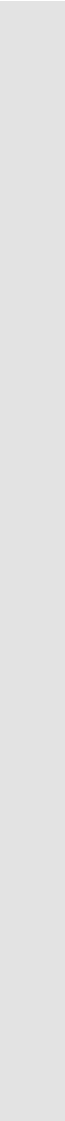
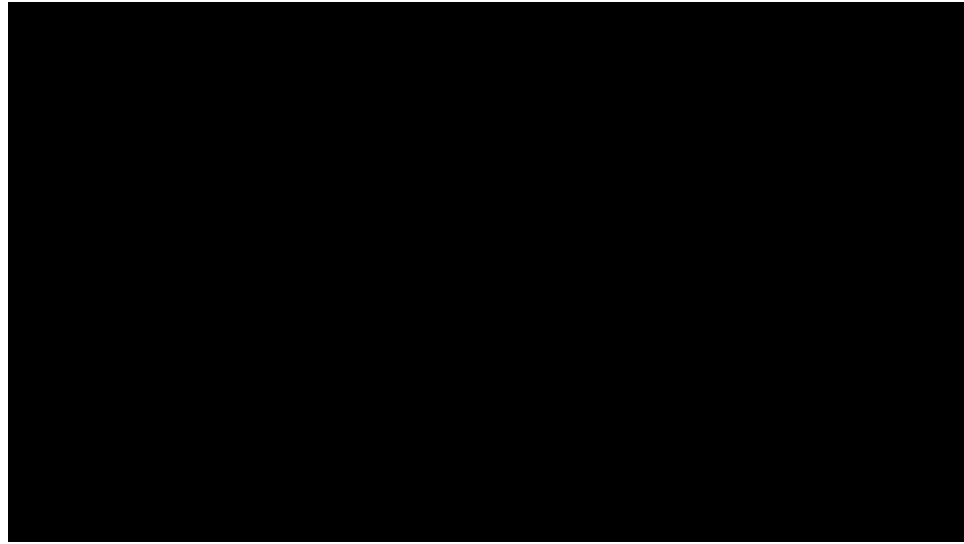
- Encourage Students to Join Clubs & ASB: Club Rush
  1. Provide outreach to Special Education classes & teachers
  2. Explain what clubs are available & what ASB is.
- Provide Support with Filling out Applications & Identifying Student interests
  1. Form a Diversity Committee
  2. Peer Support
- Facilitate Leadership Opportunities
- Find Opportunities for Students to Contribute Utilizing their Skills

# Build a Coalition

- Encourage Staff to Participate in Supporting School Activities.
- Identify Student Leaders who can Promote Successful Participation.
- Identify Members of the School Community who can Facilitate Successful Participation. (Counselors, Classified, Support, Certificated, PTSA)
- Consider Hosting a “What If” Week to Promote a Positive School Climate and an Appreciation of Diversity.



What if Week:  
A week of  
what ifs?...& a  
chance to  
appreciate  
diversity and  
accept  
differences &  
similarities.



# What do I need to do each day of WHAT IF? Week?

- Come up with a What if...for each day.  
Example: What if all my dreams came true?
- Represent each day with a color to wear: red, tie-dye.
- Have an activity students can participate at lunch in.
- Include speakers or assemblies that support the What if of the day.
- Have your leadership team develop the what ifs and activities to ensure all student groups are represented and have a voice.



# “WHAT IF” Week Sample Schedule

- Monday, Oct. 1
- Theme: What if... we overcame our obstacles?
- Speaker – assembly schedule.
- Lunch time: Obstacle course with staff – extended lunch.
- Wear blue.
- Music at lunch.
- Tuesday, Oct. 2
- Theme: What if... we all made new friends?
- Ball Pit at lunch.
- Photo Booth at lunch.
- Wear green.
- Music at lunch.
- Wednesday, Oct. 3
- Theme: What if...we started a chain reaction of kindness?
- School wide Rachel’s Challenge Assembly.
- Write kind notes on post-its.
- Wear yellow.
- Music at lunch.



# Explicit Skills Instruction

Coordinate with your Special Education Team to Teach Specific Social Skills:

How to Introduce Yourself

Turn Taking in Conversations

How to Ask for a Friend's Number

How to be a Good Friend

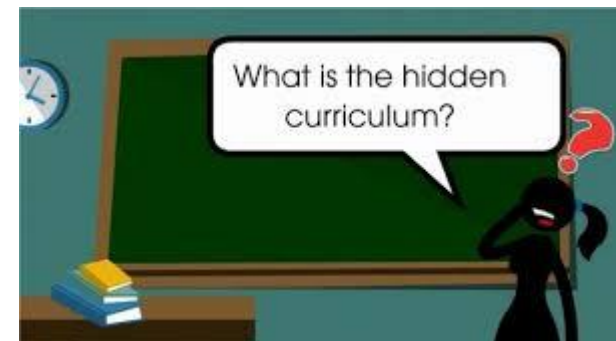
Appropriate Texting Guidelines





# What is the Hidden Curriculum?

- The hidden curriculum refers to those unstated rules or customs that, if not understood, can make the world a confusing place and cause those of us who are not neurologically wired to automatically “get it” feel isolated and “out of it” (Endow, 2009a, 2010).
- It is the social information that is not directly taught but is assumed that everybody knows (Myles, Trautman, & Schelvan, 2004).



# TEACH THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

- Tap into your special education peers and designated instructional service providers to support: social stories, social skills
- Display Social Rules In Classroom/Handout in Notebooks &/or School Agendas.
- Use Social Stories to Illustrate the Hidden Curriculum of Middle and High School
- Teach how to Identify and Deal with Sarcasm, Humor, Idioms, Metaphors



# Mentorship

- Enlist Student or Community Groups to Provide Mentoring
- Provide Opportunities for Students to Learn from Each Other in Structured Situations
- Invest in Peer Leadership Groups
- Support Mentoring by Providing Support and Time
- Be creative
- Listen to your student body

**i**NCCLUSION  
**STARTS**  
**WITH** **i**

# Peer Mentors

- Peer mentors have proven to be an effective strategy for children on the autism spectrum.
- A peer of similar age who interacts positively with the child is chosen to act as a mentor.
- The difficulties of Autism Spectrum Disorders is explained to the peer mentor in an age-appropriate way, so that the mentor can help the autistic child to learn appropriate communication skills.
- Teachers and parents can guide the peer mentor in this, so that social skills are learned in the natural environment - among other peers.



# STUDENT LOUNGE

- Provide a Room for Students to be able to take a Sensory Break if they Become Overstimulated.
- Stock the Student Lounge with Sensory Items Students can use to Satisfy Sensory Needs.
- Provide Activities: Ipad, Puzzles, Games.
- Stock the Student Lounge with Complimentary Beverages (Water or Juice) and Small Food Snacks (Goldfish & Saltine Crackers).



Student Lounge

# FACILITATE COMMUNICATION

- Communication/Interaction:
- Use a Ball Pit to Facilitate Sensory Regulation and Communication:
- Use Big Beach Balls with Questions Written on Them for
- Communication Between Students in the Ball Pit.



# What about activities specifically for students with Autism?

- Stay away from “Special” Activities.
- Providing “Special” Events Shows Students with Different Abilities that they should Expect to be Excluded.
- Expect that Students with Autism will Participate in Activities in their own way.

SEPARATE  
≠  
EQUAL

ANY QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU FOR JOINING ME!